

Plateau: Newly appointed LG boss kidnapped, murdered day after swearing-in

ISAAC SHOBAYO - JOS

THE euphoria that trailed the appointment and swearing-in of Honourable Hosea Azi as the Caretaker Chairman of Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State has been cut short by the gruesome murder of the council boss a day after he was sworn in.

Hon Azi and Mr Naomi Garba were sworn in as the Management Committee Chairman and Permanent Secretary respectively, last Thursday, by Governor Simon Lalong at a colorful ceremony that attracted many eminent personalities from the state.

The deceased was a former member of Plateau State House of Assembly during the tenure of former Governor Joshua Dariye. He was appointed chairman Management Committee, following removal of Mr Sanda Agwom Daura, who was replaced as a result of a petition against him by stakeholders from the local government.

Governor Lalong, during the swearing-in, said the replacement of the Management Committee Chairman was borne out of respect as always, for the yearnings of

the people and the resolution of the House of Assembly as mandated by law.

Sunday Tribune gathered from family of the deceased that Azi was traveling along Nasarawa to Abuja road, on Friday, when he was accosted and abducted by kidnappers who had laid

ambush for him by mounting a roadblock on the highway.

The family source said while they attempted to whisk him away, there was a struggle with the kidnappers and in the process, the car rammed into the upcoming truck, killing Hon-

ourable Azi instantly, while other three passengers had serious injuries.

It was further learnt that the accident attracted other road users who rescued the kidnappers and took them to nearby health centre where they made confessional statement about their

mission.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Abuh Emmanuel, confirmed the development to our correspondent in Jos. "I am waiting for detailed information from the DPO in charge of the area to get details of what actually transpired.

impose leaders on us,' stressing that what Idoma people need is to consolidate on the achievements already recorded.

He told the royal father that he decided to pay homage and seek his blessing as he steps into the ring once again.

In his response, the royal father noted that as the royal father, his duty was to bless his subjects who venture into politics and charged politicians to play the game devoid of violence.

ONSA funds: I only provided consultancy services —Ayu

LEON USIGBE - ABUJA

FORMER Senate President, Iyorchia Ayu, has rejected links to arms deal following the mention of his name as one of those who benefited from arms procurement funds allegedly misappropriated by the Office of the National Security (ONSA).

In a statement made available to the media in Abuja on Saturday, he argued that he could not have collected monies from the Federal Government to buy military weapons and equipment as being alleged.

Ayu was listed among those being investigated by the present administration as he was said to have been a beneficiary of the fund to the tune of N345 million.

However, he conceded that Starbriid Limited, the

firm named to have received the money belongs to him but added that the money it received was payment for the provision of consultancy services on security and electoral matters.

Ayu pleaded that neither Starbriid nor himself was involved in the business of satellite and security equipment as being alleged by the media reports which quoted the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The reports had suggested that the charges brought against detained former NSA, Sambo Dasuki (ret'd) by the EFCC, included approval for the transfer of "an aggregate sum of N345 million being part of the funds in the account of the ONSA with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to the account

of Starbriid Limited."

In denying the claim, Ayu stated: "To the best of my knowledge, neither the company nor I deal in satellites and security equipment.

"However, when I served on the National Security Council as Minister of Internal Affairs, I got educated that various aspects of security work could be pushed

under different classifications.

"Any funds remitted to the company were for consultancies on security related and electoral matters."

The former Senate President further explained that he was approached at some point by the former NSA to provide requisite advice and consultancy on difficult issues.

He added: "When Colonel Sambo Dasuki assumed duty in June 2012, he approached me to assist based on my background as a social scientist, and my previous involvement in government.

"Understandably, I provided the requisite advice whenever consulted on difficult issues," he claimed.

Appeal tribunal upholds Abaribe's election

TAIWO ADISA - ABUJA

THE Election Appeal Tribunal sitting in Owerri, Imo State, on Friday night, upheld the election of the Chairman, Senate Committee on Information and National Orientation, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe.

The Appeal Tribunal,

which set aside the earlier ruling of the Abia State National Assembly Election Petitions Tribunal, which sat in Umuahia, said that Abaribe was validly elected as the Senator representing Abia South Senatorial District.

The Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Umuahia had ordered a rerun election in Obingwa local government and some wards in Ugwunagbo Local Government.

But the Appeal Court struck

set aside the judgment of the lower tribunal, which had ordered a staggered rerun election.

The Court, however, held that the petitioners failed to prove their allegations challenging the election and added that Abaribe's election was valid as it complied with the electoral Act.

It also faulted the decision of the tribunal to reject the replies of Abaribe, PDP and INEC declaring that it was against the principle of fair

My mandate comes from Rivers people —Wike